

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1951

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, YE, PDIP
SUBJECT: VISIT OF YAR PRIME MINISTER TO US

1. WITH ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY THAT ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI HAS BEEN ASKED TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT HERE, BELIEVE TIME HAS COME TO RAISE ISSUE CALLBY HIM ON PRESIDENT CARTER. ABD AL-GHANI PLANS TO BE IN STATES ON PRIVATE VISIT TO COLLECT HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ON MAY 26. HE TOLD AMBASSADOR AND MYSELF ON APRIL 23 THAT HE HOPED MAKE PRIVATE OFFICE CALL ON PRESIDENT CARTER; PROBLEM WOULD ARISE IN MANY YEMENI MINDS IF HE WENT TO US AND WAS NOT RECEIVED.

2. AMBASSADOR DISCOURAGED PM,CITING STATE 101281 ABOUT FLOOD OF FOREIGN VISITORS TO WHITE HOUSE. HE SUGGESTED VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AS ALTERNATIVE, AND IN FACT THIS MAY BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE IF PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-GHANI IS ALSO MADE VICE PRESIDENT, AS IS PRESENTLY RUMORED IN SANA.

3. FACT REMAINS THAT SUCH VISIT IS IN OUR INTEREST. FACT THAT ABD AL-GHANI HAS BEEN PM FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS, ALREADY THREE TIME LONGER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN HISTORY OF REPUBLIC, AND HAS UNQUALIFIED RESPECT OF
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NORTHERNERS AND SOUTHERNERS, WEALTHY AND POOR, TRADITIONALIST AND MODERNIZER, MAKES HIM ALMOST UNIQUE IN YEMEN. THIS IS REMARKABLE POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENT. AT SAME TIME, ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT STRONG PERSONALITY, HE HAS DONE WONDERS IN DEVELOPING, FROM NOTHING OR OUT OF DISCORD, STRONG AND EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS LIKE CENTRAL BANK, CENTRAL PLANNING OFFICE, BUDGET OFFICE,

AND CABINET. HE IS, FINALLY, UNQUALIFIED ADMIRER OF USA--ITS CONCERNS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, FOR ITS SUCCESS WITH THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, ITS MELDING OF MANY CULTURES INTO INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP. HIS ELEGANT ENGLISH, HIS SWIFT INTELLIGENCE, MARK HIM AS THE KIND OF ARAB WHO ELSEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST JUST AS IN YEMEN, HAS EMERGED FROM OUR SCHOOLS TO TRY TO FORGE A NEW LEADERSHIP WITH THE US. DURING LAST THREE YEARS YEMEN-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAVE UNDERGONE REMARK-ABLE EXPANSION INCLUDING, FOR INSTANCE, FOUR TIMES AS MANY PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, MILITARY SALES AGREEMENTS WORTH OVER \$150 MILLION, NEW AND INCREASED WID PROGRAMS, AND

MANY MORE SCHOLARSHIPS WHICH ABD AL-GHANI CEASE-LESSLY URGED US TO PROVIDE--"TO BALANCE IN QUALITY WHAT SOVIETS PROVIDE IN QUANTITY."

4. ABD AL-GHANI--LIKE MANY YEMENIS NOW--IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN HORN AND WHAT GROWING SOVIET ROLE IN PDRY AS WELL AS IN EHTIOPIA MAYPORTEND IN NEXT FEW YEARS FOR MODERATES IN PENIN-SULA, AND PARTICULARLY IN POPULOUS YAR. HE SHARES A WIDESPREAD YEMENI DESIRE FOR MORE ATTENTION AND RECOGNITION BY US, FOR A RELATIONSHIP WHICH IS DIRECT AND PERSONAL BUT NOT RPT NOT IN CONTRADICTION WITH MORE FUNDAMENTAL LINK TO SAUDIS.
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5. PRIVATE OFFICE CALL TAKES HOUR OF TIME OF PRESIDENT, INCLUDING BRIEF MEETING WITH REPORTERS AFTERWARD ON WHITE HOUSE STEPS. THERE ARE NO AIRPORT MEETINGS, NO NIGHTS AT THE BLAIR HOUSE, NO BANQUETS OR WORKING LUNCHESES. I URGE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENT. OUR ROLE IN YEMEN HAS GROWN; SUCH CONTACTS CAP IT, AND MAY STRENGTHEN IT FOR TESTS TO COME WITH RADICAL FORCES IN THE HORN.
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